

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #23

GILLNET FISHERIES: Deep gear has been permitted in the Coghill, Eshamy, Montague, and Unakwik districts since Monday, July 2.

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 12 for a 48-hour period. An aerial survey of the Bering River District was conducted last Sunday under generally poor conditions. Another survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown later this week.

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 12 for a 48-hour period. The cumulative sonar count to date is 1,026,750 fish whereas the minimum anticipated count to date is 552,362 fish. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 48-hour period that closed on Saturday, July 7 is 54,400 sockeye salmon with 199 deliveries reported. This compares to an anticipated harvest 44,600 sockeye salmon for this period. The Gulkana Hatchery sockeye salmon harvest contribution from the fishing period that closed on June 26 was 53%. For the week ending July 14, the Western Copper River Delta survey count was 16,300 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 10,700 sockeye salmon. During this survey observational conditions on the Copper River Delta were poor. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown later this week.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open for an 84-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12 with an additional 60-hour period anticipated to begin at 8:00 am on Monday, July 16. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60° 20.00' N., 147° 26.59' W. to 60° 14.75' N., 147° 35.35' W. to 60° 02.50' N., 147° 44.41' W. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest for the period that closed on Sunday, July 8 was 32,200 chum salmon with 106 deliveries reported.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding Bettles Bay Subdistrict, excluding waters south of a latitude line at 60° 46.10' N., and excluding the **WNH SHA**, will open to commercial **drift gillnet** harvest for an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12. Anadromous stream closures within the WNH THA will not be in effect during this fishing period. Effective from 8:00 am, Thursday, July 12 to 8:00 pm, Sunday, July 15, regulatory closed waters pertaining to the Coghill River, as specified in 5 AAC 24.350(6)(B)), will not be in effect. Commercial fishing will not be permitted within the bed or channel of the Coghill River at any stage of the tide.

The Coghill River weir passed 3,505 sockeye salmon yesterday, which brings season cumulative escapement to 42,958 sockeye salmon versus a minimum anticipated goal of 12,076 fish. This cumulative escapement satisfies the midpoint of the Coghill River sustainable escapement goal. An estimated 3,000 sockeye salmon were observed below the weir this morning. Based upon the preseason forecast and inseason assessment, including passage at the weir and commercial harvest, the department anticipates continued strong run entry. **In an effort to maximize commercial harvest potential and stay within the escapement goal range, the Coghill District within College Fiord, north of a latitude line at 61°00.45'N. (Point Pakenham), will open to commercial purse seine harvest for an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12.**

Preliminary estimates of commercial harvest from the 72-hour period that closed on Sunday, July 8 are 174,300 chum, 79,100 sockeye, and 5,100 pink salmon with 548 deliveries reported. Cumulative CPF harvest estimates to date are 1.27 million chum, 320,700 sockeye, and 7,900 pink salmon. As of July 7, PWSAC estimated 208,000-270,000 chum salmon for WNH broodstock escapement. PWSAC's chum salmon broodstock goal is 216,000 fish.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District, **excluding the AGZ**, will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 48-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12. A 36-hour period is anticipated to begin on Monday, July 16 at 8:00 am.

Harvest from the period that closed Sunday, July 8 was 33,400 chum, 108,800 sockeye, and 19,800 pink salmon with 727 deliveries reported.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine fishing for a 48-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12. Harvest from the 36-hour fishing period that closed on Tuesday, July 10 is confidential.

SEINE FISHERIES: Please see the Coghill District section of this announcement for information regarding purse seine fishing opportunity targeting surplus Coghill River sockeye salmon. An aerial survey of portions of the Eastern and Northern districts was flown on Monday, July 9. Early season indicators of wild stock chum and pink salmon run entry and escapement in the Northern, Eastern, and Southeastern districts are behind anticipated numbers and therefore do not support a wild stock fishery at this time. VFDA is in the process of conducting cost recovery for pink salmon in Port Valdez. VFDA reports that pink salmon harvest on Monday, July 9 was approximately 83,300 fish with an average weight of approximately 4.9 pounds per fish and 48% female. ADF&G sampling of cost recovery harvest from Entrance Point on July 9 resulted in an estimated sex ratio of 43% female. Cumulative VFDA cost recovery is 4 million pounds through July 9, or 92% of a final goal of 4.4 million pounds. It is anticipated that VFDA will complete cost recovery fishing efforts today, July 11.

The CPF harvest estimate from the 14-hour period in the Eastern District on Sunday, July 8 is 1 king, 1,000 sockeye, 1 coho, 1.8 million pink and 2,000 chum salmon with 255 deliveries reported. ADF&G sampling of CPF harvest from Rocky Point on July 8 resulted in an estimated sex ratio of 37% female. The CPF harvest estimate from the 14-hour period in the Eastern District on Tuesday, July 10 is not available at the time of this announcement. However, it is estimated that 500,000 to 600,000 pink salmon were harvested in the Eastern District on Tuesday, July 10. ADF&G sampling of CPF harvest from Anderson Bay, Entrance Point and Valdez Arm (mixed sample) on July 10 resulted in an estimated sex ratio of 43% female.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters in the Eastern District, north of the latitude of Rocky Point, will open to commercial fishing for 14 hours on Thursday, July 12 beginning at 6:00 am. Waters of Port Valdez east of 146° 23.00' W. longitude will be closed to commercial fishing during this period. Waters of Galena Bay, Jack Bay, and Sawmill Bay, inside the Salmon Harvest Task Force markers, will be closed during this fishing period. Anadromous stream closures south of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point **will be in effect** during this fishing period. Anadromous stream closures north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point **will not be in effect** during this fishing period. All remaining regulatory closed waters north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point **will not be in effect** during this fishing period. VFDA reports an estimated 30,000-50,000 pink salmon at the Solomon Gulch Hatchery. Based on preseason projections, VFDA would expect to have accumulated 285,000 pink salmon for broodstock by July 11. Time and area for the next commercial fishing period will be based on consideration for broodstock collection progress and harvest results from the July 12 fishery.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: On the east side of Knight Island, the waters of Marsha Bay, west of 147° 39.75' W. long., will open to commercial purse seine fishing for an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12 and a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 16. Anadromous stream closures within Marsha Bay will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest reported for the 84-hour fishing period that ended on Sunday, July 8 is confidential.

The waters of Sawmill Bay, including the AFK Hatchery Terminal Harvest Area (THA) and Special Harvest Area (SHA), inside of the newly defined THA line from 60° 03.66' N. lat., 147° 59.11' W. long. to 60° 02.77' N. lat., 148° 01.00' W. long. to 60° 02.76' N. lat., 148° 01.66' W. long. will open to commercial purse seine fishing for an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12 and a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 16. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 84-hour period that ended on Sunday, July 8 is 8,900 sockeye, 3,700 pink and 14,200 chum salmon with 16 deliveries reported.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)).** Fish tickets have a "not sold/personal use" field to report these salmon.

The next scheduled PURSE SEINE salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Friday, July 13. The next scheduled GILLNET salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, July 14.

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.